



YALI Network

Elevator Pitch

STEP 1

Brainstorm Your Skills

First things first. Let's brainstorm your best qualities, skills, and past performance highlights that you should mention in your elevator pitch.

Answer with what comes to mind first. This is not exclusively for professional experience—maybe you are highly organized and efficient in your personal life. Maybe you volunteer regularly in your community. List everything that you're proud of or passionate about.

1. What do you enjoy doing? What are you great at?

2. What positive feedback have you received from an employer and/or teacher?

3. What are your greatest accomplishments?



HELPFUL TIP:

"Put yourself in your employer's shoes. It's not always what you communicate, but how you communicate with people that can affect whether they'll accept what you say or not."

— Immaculate Willbroad Kyamanywa, Mandela Washington Fellow

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STEP 2

Personalize Your Answer

A personalized elevator pitch will make you memorable and relatable. Think about how you can stand out and look special amongst a large candidate pool. What makes you special and worth investing in over another applicant? We can refer to this as your “unique value proposition (UVP).”

Your UVP can be a professional qualification or certification, but it can also be a personal characteristic, such as intellect. Just make sure you quantify your claim with detailed, factual information. For example, if your UVP is that you are highly intelligent, make sure you follow that claim with quantifiable and relevant proof (e.g., you received perfect scores in math class this year).

To develop your UVP, answer the following questions, and use the Venn Diagram on the next page:

- 1. What does a hiring manager desire?** Whether applying to an actual position or imagining your dream position, what is the objective and/or purpose of that professional position? Think about why the position exists and how it functions. What is the goal of someone in that position? You can follow an actual job description or imagine what a hiring manager would desire from such a candidate.

- 2. What do qualified candidates offer?** What type of skills or abilities does a person need in this position? This can be anything from education to professional and life experiences. Think about what the perfect candidate would embody. You can follow the requirements listed in an actual job description or imagine what an ideal candidate would provide.

- 3. What unique abilities do you offer?** While only listing skills, talents, and/or hobbies that are relevant to the desired position, make sure to include extra details about yourself beyond the requirements included in the job description. What do you want to mention that is not detailed through your general qualifications and abilities, but that makes you unique?



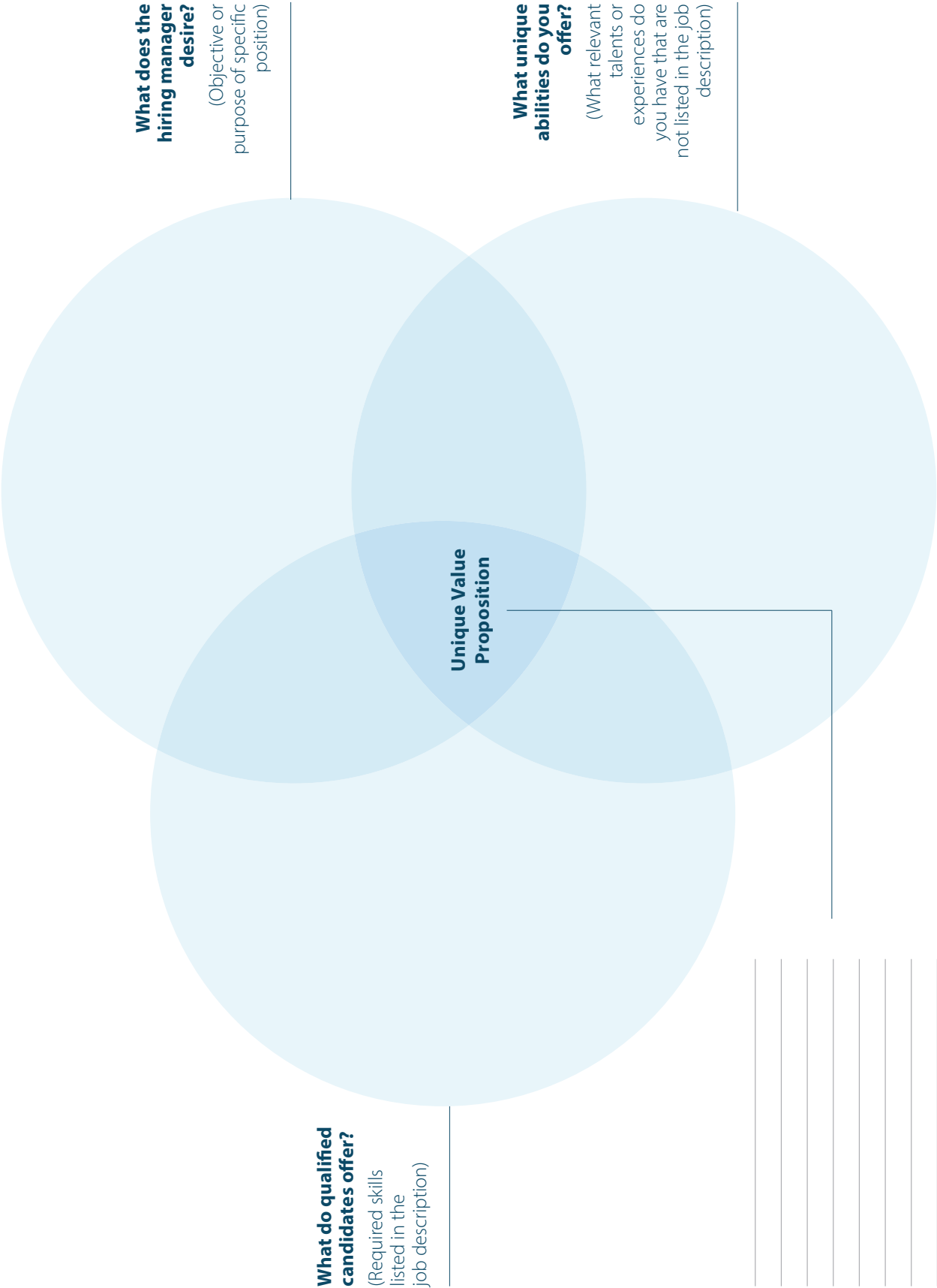
HELPFUL TIP:

"You have to believe in yourself, and you have to believe that you have something to offer. You can't tell an employer, 'take me as I am.' You have to know what they want, and believe in yourself enough that you develop it out of yourself."

—Ukinbo Omorowa Dare, Mandela Washington Fellow

Take Ukinbo's advice, and prove to an employer why you're the best candidate.

A Venn Diagram lets you look at information in a different way, helping you organize and communicate ideas more clearly. In this case, each question above is represented by one of three overlapping circles, showing differences and common elements between each. When completing the Venn Diagram, thinking about what those overlaps (especially the one in the center) mean about your UVP.



STEP 3

Define Your Goal or “Ask”

What is your professional goal that you are currently working towards? This is a pivotal part to your elevator pitch. If the person to whom you are speaking is a hiring manager, your boss, or someone who can help you attain your professional goals, what would you like to ask of them?

While your goal can be hugely aspirational, your “ask” requires someone else’s assistance, so remember to keep it reasonable. Ask for an informational interview to explore potential opportunities, rather than directly asking for a job, which could be seen as requesting preferential treatment. An elevator pitch is not an opportunity to set an expectation of another person; it’s an opportunity to prove yourself!

To develop your “ask,” answer the following questions, and use the Venn Diagram on the previous page:

1. What is your short-term professional goal? What is your long-term professional goal? If you need more help defining goals, check out the YALI Online Course “Setting and Achieving Goals.”

2. What is the career objective or your dream job?

3. What will help you achieve your objective or attain your dream job (e.g., internship, job, advice, reference, mentor)?



HELPFUL TIP:

“You must identify the need that you are addressing, use examples, and make sure it is not only personal, but something that engages others.”

—Glory Ilunga Kapya Mulimba, Mandela Washington Fellow

Glory’s advice speaks to an employer’s need in her/his staff. Make sure everything you say in your elevator pitch addresses those needs. Show that your goals align perfectly with the position.

Put It All Together

Once complete, go back through these three exercises and highlight or circle the top points you want to emphasize in your elevator pitch. Pick one top point from each step, and then place each part together in a smooth and natural dialogue. Be sure to practice giving your elevator pitch in front of a mirror, and with friends, family, or colleagues. While having a written script is helpful for drafting what you wish to say, you won't always have a precise script in front of you, so try to keep things conversational and light.

Here are a couple of examples of strong elevator pitches. Make sure you tailor yours to speak about your own experiences, strengths, skills, and goals!

Hi, my name is [insert name]. I'm currently studying education. One of my greatest strengths is my ability to make my lessons very practical for my students, and make sure they understand how to apply what they learn in the classroom to their communities. I'm interested in securing a job at a nonprofit that will allow me to continue teaching and develop curriculum. Because my former volunteer work with nonprofit programs was key to my success, it's important for me to help others develop to their highest potential.

I'm currently working as Human Resources Manager at [insert name]. My supervisors frequently compliment me for being able to see different sides of the same story, and negotiate with different personalities. I'm looking for suggestions/advice on how I can further expand my expertise in this field, because my ultimate goal is to help organizations develop more tolerant workplace cultures.

HELPFUL TIP:

So you gave your elevator pitch? Great work! Don't forget to exchange contact information with your new professional acquaintance, and always follow up with a thank you note (if the acquaintance did you a favor).